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## Painting Not Painting

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# SHINER

JOE CHEETHAM  
CALLUM RUSSELL  
MASSIMO STENTA

Reception:  
Sunday 10th June 12-6pm  
Open by appointment  
8th-14th June 2018

West Barns Arts  
1 School Brae  
West Barns  
Dunbar  
EH42 1UD

## **SHINER**

Group show including recent work by Joe Cheetham, Callum Russell and Massimo Stenta. With a text by Dr. Deborah Jackson.  
West Barnes Arts  
Dunbar  
Reception Sunday 10th June 12-6pm  
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### **Painting Not Painting**

There is an obvious thread of irreverence and eclecticism towards painting that connects the work of artists Joe Cheetham, Callum Russell and Massimo Stenta. Considered collectively their work consciously recapitulates the legacy of painting's objectionable past that led to proclamations of its death, namely painting's association with the ideologies of expression, genius and individuality. Their works look forwards and backwards drawing on tactics and concepts that deconstruct the apparent immediacy of expressionism and towards ideas to do with uniqueness and reproducibility. Beyond the observation that all three artists' work opaquely paraphrases painting's resuscitation and rehabilitation it is also apparent that their paintings are not paintings at all.

Resonating from much of Cheetham's work is the colourful exoticism and political and cultural heritage of the rave scene of the 1990s in the North West of England. Lurid spray painted canvases evoke the sight of nocturnal, laser-lit illegal raves and the euphoric high that engulfed Britain's youth in a hedonistic haze.

However, squaring up to the works there are a number of 'gestural' marks that have been made with deliberation. Cheetham describes the process of making of these marks by "scratching and bruising the raw canvas". It's as if we are bearing witness to the conflation of the blissed out joyful dancing of the ravers with the fracturing of the fabric of society, marked by social division and inequality. A timely reminder of our contemporary precarious condition.

Russell's work provides a counterpoint to our dominant socio-political narratives of order and stability. His works present an unsettling face-off between line-making and the pulsated, blotched smudges that are incidentally produced.

Despite the economy of materials used – a pen and ruler – and a strict limitations of line making, the inherent element of chance produces unintentional 'expressive' effects. Whilst the pen furrows into the surface guided by the ruler, only a partial degree of control is possible as the ink bleeds and the ruler drags and scrapes it along. Russell doesn't attempt to disguise the imperfections, on the contrary his works are dependent on revealing the disintegration of the process.

Stenta's work cultivates an association between performance and gesture through the process of transference of paint onto a dust sheet then into polyester tarpaulin to produce them. Although not intentional, the resulting works can be read as a parody of *Visite à Picasso* (1949) in which Picasso paints on a sheet of Plexiglass positioned between the artist and the camera.

However, rather than an attempt to decrypt the gestures of painting Stenta describes his work as being "challenged by the transfer process that eventually turns it into an anti-gesture". The outcome is an anti-gesture that blends the appropriation of ordinary everyday methods of provocation, such as graffiti, with the concerns of expanded painting. It is through a method of recognition and deduction, layering and fracturing that a bold and efficient method of information exchange materialises.

- Dr Deborah Jackson, Director of Visual Culture, Edinburgh College of Art

Joe Cheetham  
(b.1992, Epsom)  
[www.joecheetham.com](http://www.joecheetham.com)

Recent exhibitions include: Joe Cheetham, solo show, Trade Gallery, Nottingham; Wherever You Land, Slugtown, Newcastle; Sunday Blues, Old Hairdresser's, Glasgow; MFA Degree Show, Edinburgh College of Art, Edinburgh; No Bad Wednesdays, Voidoid Archive, Glasgow.

Massimo Stenta  
(b. 1991, Trieste)  
[www.massimostenta.com](http://www.massimostenta.com)

Recent exhibitions include: EPHEMERAL BRAND, solo show, Rizzuto Gallery, Palermo, IT; Wherever You Land, Slugtown, Newcastle; Among humans and other things, Studi Festival, Milan, IT; Sunday Blues, Old Hairdresser's, Glasgow; Don Salon, Embassy Gallery, Edinburgh.

Callum Russell  
(b. 1990, London)  
[www.cluisrustle.com](http://www.cluisrustle.com)

Recent exhibitions include: Co-director of Glassmount, Embassy Gallery, Edinburgh; Pleasure Dome, duo exhibition, Suede Gallery, Edinburgh; MA Degree Show, Edinburgh College of Art, Edinburgh; Basic, group show part of Embassy Annuale, Edinburgh.

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